

REMARKS

1. Claims 1-14 are pending in the application. Claims 3, 6 and 10-14 have been cancelled. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, Applicant requests reexamination of the application and reconsideration of the rejection of the unallowed claims.

2. Rejections under 102(b). Claims 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8 stand rejected over Lund et al (US Publication 2002/0101053). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitations of claims 3 and 6, and to recite that the ribs are positioned remote from the connector, as shown in the drawings of Applicant's invention. Lund et al does not teach or suggest this combination of elements. Specifically, Lund et al does not show reinforcing ribs formed on a step pad, nor does it show reinforcing ribs formed on an underside of the step pad remote from the connector. Furthermore, Lund et al does not show a pocket which snugly receives fore and aft flanges of a structural frame. Claims 2, 5, 7 and 8 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

3. Claims 1-3, 7-10 and 13-14 stand rejected over Takahashi (US 4,778,032). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitations of claims 3 and 6, and to recite that the ribs are positioned remote from the

connector. Takahashi does not teach or suggest this combination of elements. Specifically, Takahashi does not show reinforcing ribs formed on an underside of a step pad remote from the connector. Takahashi shows a single piece running board made of plastic with ribs all along the underside, including at the mount projections 24. Furthermore, Takahashi not show a pocket which snugly receives fore and aft flanges of a structural frame. Claims 2 and 7-9 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 10, and 13-14 have been cancelled. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

4. Claim Rejections under 103(a). Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected over Lund et al (US Publication 2002/0101053) alone. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 3 has been cancelled, its limitations incorporated into claim 1. Lund et al does not teach or suggest reinforcing ribs formed on a step pad, nor does it show reinforcing ribs formed on an underside of the step pad remote from the connector. Furthermore, Lund et al does not teach or suggest a pocket which snugly receives fore and aft flanges of a structural frame. Claim 4 is dependent from Claim 1 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 discussed above. Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

5. Claim 6 stands rejected over Lund et al in view of Pohill (US 6,588,781). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 6 has been cancelled. The limitations of claim 6 have been incorporated into claim 1 above. Applicant has

distinguished Lund et al above. Nothing in Pohill, either alone or in combination with Lund et al, teaches or suggests the combination of elements in claim 1. Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

6. Claims 9-11 stand rejected over Lund et al in view of Bernard (US 6,409,193). These claims have been cancelled.

7. Claims 4, 11 and 12 stand rejected under 103(a) over Takahashi alone. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 11 and 12 have been cancelled. Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn and the claims be allowed.

CONCLUSION

The additional citations made of record and not relied upon by the Examiner have been considered by the Applicant. None is seen, either alone or in combination, to teach or suggest the present invention. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of the claims and allowance of the application.



Respectfully Submitted,

Ross Vincent

Robert Kelley Roth
Attorney for Applicants
Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone
150 W. Jefferson, Suite 2500
Detroit, MI 48226
313-496-7568
313-496-8454 (fax)
roth@millercanfield.com

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper is being sent via First Class Mail on October 17, 2005 to the Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, DC 20231.

10-17-05
Date of Signature

By: Cheryl Trionfi

DELIB:2669541.1\118345-00021